

transmitting said second network data with said first network interface.

2. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the first network interface does not support the protocol, the method further comprising:

presenting said first and second network interfaces to a protocol stack as being a homogeneous team of network interfaces.

3. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the protocol includes encrypting the first network data before submitting said first network data to a network.

b1 4. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
communicatively coupling a hardware-based encryption processor with said second network interface, said encryption processor performing said processing of said first network data.

5. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the hardware-based encryption processor supports a primary mode for encrypting network data for said second network interface, and a secondary mode for encrypting network data for said first network interface.

6. (Unchanged) The method of claim 5, wherein the said first and second network interfaces operate in an adaptive load balancing mode, and wherein said second network interface interleaves said primary mode encryption with said secondary mode encryption.

7. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
providing a third network interface supporting the protocol;

wherein processing said first network data into said second network data is balanced across said second and third network interfaces.

8. (Unchanged) The method of claim 7, wherein said balancing is performed according to a workload of said second and third network interfaces.

9. (Unchanged) The method of claim 5, wherein the said first and second network interfaces operate in an adapter fault tolerance mode, and wherein said first network interface is a primary network interface, and said second network interface is a backup network interface.

b1 10. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the said first and second network interfaces operate in an adaptive load balancing mode, and wherein said second network interface interleaves processing network data for said second network interface with processing said first network data into said second network data.

11. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the said first and second network interfaces operate in an adapter fault tolerance mode, and wherein said first network interface is a primary network interface, and said second network interface is a backup network interface.

12. (Amended) A readable medium having encoded thereon instructions for sharing processing capabilities of multiple network interfaces among said network interfaces, the instructions capable of directing a processor to:

receive a first network data to be transmitted by a first network interface according to a protocol;

determine whether the first network interface supports the protocol;

if the protocol is not supported, then provide said first network data to a second network interface for processing of said first network data into a second network data according to the protocol; and

transmit said second network data with said second network interface.

13. (Unchanged) The medium of claim 12, wherein the protocol includes encrypting the first network data before submitting said first network data to a network.

14. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 12, said instructions including further instructions to direct said processor to:

b1 process said first network data into said second network data with a hardware-based encryption processor communicatively coupled with said second network interface.

15. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 14, wherein the hardware-based encryption processor supports a primary mode and a secondary mode, said instructions including further instructions to direct said processor to:

encrypt network data for said second network interface when said encryption processor is in said primary mode; and

encrypt network data for said first network interface when said encryption processor is in said secondary mode.

16. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 15, wherein said first and second network interfaces operate in an adaptive load balancing mode, and wherein said second network interface interleaves said primary mode encryption with said secondary mode encryption.

17. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 16, in which a third network interface supports the protocol, said instructions including further instructions to direct said processor to:

balance processing said first network data into said second network data across said second and third network interfaces.

18. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 17, wherein said balancing is performed according to a workload of said second and third network interfaces.

b1 19. (Previously Amended) The medium of claim 15, wherein said first and second network interfaces operate in an adapter fault tolerance mode.

20. (Previously Amended) In a computing device, a network interface team, comprising:

a first network interface lacking support for a protocol; and

a second network interface supporting the protocol, said second network interface configured to process network data for the first network interface if said network data is to be transmitted according to the protocol and to return processed data to the first network interface.

21. (Previously Amended) The network interface team of claim 20, further comprising:

a first receiver, communicatively coupled to said first network interface, for receiving network data to be transmitted by said first network interface;

a second receiver, communicatively coupled to said second network interface, for receiving network data to be transmitted by said second network interface; and

a transferor, communicatively coupled with said first network interface and said second receiver, and configured to transfer network data to said second network interface for processing according to the protocol.

22. **(New)** A method for sharing processing capabilities of members of a system of network interfaces among the system members, comprising:

determining a first network interface is to transmit the first data;

b1 determining the first data is configured in a manner unsupported by the first network interface;

locating a second network interface of the system that supports the data configuration;

secondarily processing by the second network interface of the first data in accordance with the protocol into a second data; and

providing the second data to the first network interface so that the second data appears to have been processed by the first network interface.

23. **(New)** The method of claim 22, further comprising:

selecting the first network interface to transmit the first data based at least in part on a load-balancing of network traffic across the plural network interfaces;

performing by a driver for the first network interface of said determining the first data is configured according to the protocol unsupported by the first network interface;

receiving by the driver of the second data, wherein the data is now in a format supported by the network interface; and

providing by the driver of the second data to the first network interface.

24. **(New)** A method for distributing network processing across a team of network interfaces cards including at least a first network interface card (NIC) lacking support for a first specialized capability and a second NIC that supports the first specialized capability, the method comprising:

receiving first data to be processed and transmitted by the first NIC to a recipient;

determining said processing the first data requires the first specialized capability unsupported by the first NIC;

secondarily processing by the second NIC of the first data into second data with the supported first specialized capability; and

providing the second data to the first NIC for transmission to the recipient.

25. **(New)** The method of claim 24, wherein the second NIC comprises an application specific integrated circuit providing the first specialized capability.

26. **(New)** The method of claim 24, wherein the team of network interfaces include a third network that supports a second specialized capability, the method comprising:

aggregating specialized capabilities offered by interfaces of the team; and

providing a virtual NIC appearing to provide each of the specialized processing capabilities.